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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 570
By Chumney

A RESOLUTION to honor and recognize Mr. William Walter Farris
for his meritorious service to the state of
Tennessee.

WHEREAS, it is appropriate that the members of this General Assembly should pause in their deliberations to honor those persons who have performed with uncommon devotion and enthusiasm and whose incomparable achievements have greatly benefited their respective communities and fellow citizens; and

WHEREAS, through their civic and professional efforts, these estimable people have distinguished themselves as community leaders of whom we can all be proud; and

WHEREAS, William Walter (Bill) Farris is one such remarkable person, who has earned the admiration of his fellow Tennesseans for his voluminous contributions to his profession and his community; and

WHEREAS, a native of Dyer County, Mr. Farris is the quintessential "pillar" of the greater Memphis community; and

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WHEREAS, after graduating from Trimble High School, Bill Farris attended Memphis State University and Cumberland University School of Law, where he earned the Doctor of Jurisprudence degree in 1946. He was admitted to the bar in that same year; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Farris is now the senior partner of the law firm of Farris, Mathews, Branan, Bogango and Hellen; and

WHEREAS, throughout his peerless career, Bill Farris has given unreservedly of himself, his time, and his talents to perpetuate the public good; at times, he has selflessly endured a drastic cut in pay to serve his fellow citizens; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Farris first delved into the political arena when he campaigned for the late Senator Estes Kefauver and Governor Gordon Browning in 1948; he went on to work as an attorney in the inheritance tax division of state government, eventually serving in a cabinet position as director of old age and survivors insurance in 1951-52; and

WHEREAS, he holds the distinction of having served as an executive assistant for three consecutive Memphis mayors; and

WHEREAS, in 1956, Mayor Edmund Orgill appointed Mr. Farris as the director of personnel; during his meritorious service in this important post he reorganized the city's civil service system; and

WHEREAS, Bill Farris won his first political race in 1959, when he was elected to serve as commissioner of Memphis public works; he later served with distinction as Assistant County Attorney from 1964-68, as a member of the old Memphis Airport Commission from 1965-67, as a county court member from 1968-1977, and as a state senator in 1969; and

WHEREAS, friends and colleagues attribute Mr. Farris's success to his stalwart work ethic? he rarely missed a meeting and was often the first person to arrive at work and the last one to leave; and

WHEREAS, renowned as one of the most astute politicians in Tennessee, Mr. Farris is an active and vital part of Shelby County, as evidenced by his stellar service in numerous governmental and political arenas; and

WHEREAS, Bill Farris has earned the respect of the citizens of Memphis, Shelby County and the state of Tennessee, and this General Assembly for his tireless work to better his community and the quality of life for his fellow Tennesseans; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Farris is recognized statewide by Democrats for his many contributions to the Democratic Party, he serves with acumen and clarity as a member of the Tennessee Democratic Executive Committee and the National Democratic Committee; he has previously rendered astute service as the chairman of the Shelby County Democratic Party and Tennessee Democratic Party; and

WHEREAS, a civic-minded individual whose benevolent nature knows no bounds, Bill Farris has devoted his considerable talents to a great number of community organizations, including the Al Chymia Shriners Temple and the Park Avenue Masonic Lodge; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Farris evidenced his dedication to providing quality education for all Tennesseans throughout his exemplary tenure on the Board of Regents (1978-1997), serving as vice-chairman for two terms; and

WHEREAS, despite the demands of a highly successful legal career, Mr. Farris has still found time to lend his peerless talents as a distinguished member of the Chamber of Commerce, the Greater Memphis State Academic Booster Group, the Highland Hundred Club, and the Memphis Round Table of the National Association of Christians and Jews, where he has previously served as director; and

WHEREAS, Bill Farris has unselfishly devoted himself to the public good through his praiseworthy service on numerous boards and commissions, including the Airport Commission, Charter Commission, Private Industry Council, the Shelby County Public Building Authority, and the Tennessee Industrial Development Authority; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Farris worked tirelessly and with purpose as the co-chairman of the Tax Reform Coalition of the Governor's Job Conference from 1982-84 and as the vice-chairman of the Chickasaw Basin Authority from 1974-78; and

WHEREAS, Bill Farris personifies the spirit and dedication that is characteristic of true Tennesseans; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Farris has proven himself to be a diligent upholder of the great volunteer tradition of Tennessee by dedicating many years of his life to the development and prosperity of the Memphis community he so dearly loves; and

WHEREAS, his many accomplishments aside, Bill Farris is most appreciative of the love and support he receives from his wife, Jimmie, and their five children, William, Jr.; Karen; James; John; and Laura Anne. He is also the grandfather of eight; and

WHEREAS, highly regarded as a professional and friend, Mr. Bill Farris is the epitome of a person totally committed to the highest ideals of public service and he should be specially recognized; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED FIRST GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, That we hereby honor and applaud Mr. William Walter "Bill" Farris for his meritorious service to the Memphis community and to this state and extend to him our best wishes for much continued success in all future endeavors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.